

Balson Shows Way To Wycombe Triumph

BY "NOVA"

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SCHOOLTEACHER John Balson confounded his critics and shattered Barking in 90 inspired minutes of Isthmian League play as Wycombe Wanderers continued their revival in the gloom of London, E.15, on Saturday.

The tall and powerful Balson, combining wonderfully as a twin spearhead with the unshakeable Lowen, scored twice to bring his total of goals for the senior side to five in four outings. And the referee's whistle just denied him the hat-trick he richly deserved—the ball being on its way into the net just as the final whistle blew!

As at Oxford last week, this was a victory made possible by individual skills allied with great team-work, and Barking—without a league win since October 26—were pushed aside more easily than the score-line might suggest. Wycombe, in fact, were three goals up only 15 minutes from time, when Barking scrambled in one. But they made no more impression until a minute before the end, when they scored their second.

ACCENT ON ATTACK

Had Barking snatched a point it would certainly have been an injustice, for Wycombe were by far the better side. With Dennis Syrett in impeccable form, John Beck really superb and the half-backs and Pullin right on top of their jobs, the Wycombe forwards were able to concentrate entirely on attacking formations.

Since the introduction of Lowen and Balson the forward line has moved sweetly and the two men who seem to have benefited most are Worley and Hodges. Hodges had a quiet afternoon on this occasion but Worley was back to his brilliant best.

Against the quick-tackling, ginger-haired Brian Moffatt he has often found his match, but on Saturday it was different. Worley beat him on the inside, the outside and sometimes even in the air! He played unselfishly throughout, too, and the whole team benefited as a result.

Wycombe's right-wing flank looked dangerous as soon as the defence recovered from the initial opening burst from Barking, and after 17 minutes Wycombe should have gone ahead, but White saved Lowen's shot after a fine pass from Balson. Minutes later Bowen popped up again but the home side breathed again as his shot smacked against a post.

FIRST BLOOD

Barking were not entirely on the defensive but the Wanderers'

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efficient defenders made their efforts seem futile in comparison. Just when it seemed as if there would be no score before half-time Hodges sent over a long corner-kick which Worley rammed home through the legs of defenders.

And four minutes after the interval, with Wycombe carrying on the good work, Lowen and Balson combined cleverly before the inside-left broke away to shrug off two defenders and crash home a fine goal.

Barking were unlucky when Gray hit a fine shot onto the bar but as hard as Porter and Morris tried, they could never escape the attentions of red-shirted defenders. Then, after brief moments of excitement, as first Horseman—who had a quieter afternoon than usual—shot weakly from a good position, and Gale was "booked" for a fierce tackle, Balson went through in great style before being felled inside the penalty area. Worley took the spot kick—but, like three of his colleagues already this year, shot wide.

Wycombe had their reward, however, when Lowen split the defence with a great pass for Balson to crash home number three.

Barking shuffled their side and 15 minutes from time Gibson scored as Syrett was pinned to the ground and a minute from the end Porter added a second. But their revival had come too late.

Barking.—P. White; D. Ford, B. Moffatt; R. Webster, S. Turner, C. Lewis; R. Nugent, M. Morris, D. Porter, R. Gray, K. Gibson.

Wycombe.—D. Syrett; J. Beck, G. Pullin; G. Maharg, P. Roystone, C. Gale; L. Worley, T. Horseman, P. Lowen, J. Balson, P. Hodges.